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Chiang

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2-11-1920

# Letter from May-ling Soong Chiang, 1920-02-11, Shanghai, China, to Emma Mills

May-ling Soong Chiang

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## Letter from May-ling Soong Chiang, 1920-02-11, Shanghai, China, to Emma Mills

### Transcription

30 Seymour Road,  
Shanghai,  
11 February, 1920

Dear Dada,

No use to apologize why I have not written for so long because you understand that I have been having a reaction from over activity. Well, now that Miss Pendleton has gone and a few other little excitements have passed off, and I am somewhat recovered I can be myself again. By the way, you should not envy my hustling, for I found myself nervous as a cat, and as irritable as an uncovered electric wire the last three weeks. I began by having hysterics, and being very unsociable and snappy, and contrary. Now tho, I think I am better, especially after I made my family understand that a part of my time belongs to me exclusively and cannot be tampered with by anyone else. And how I did break engagements right and left, just because I was peeved that they were made without my consent and knowledge. I think the family finally understood that I was all in physically and stopped expecting me to be merry sunshine under all circumstances.

As you know, my mother is very conservative and never lets me dance altho she thinks that I should go to the dances my friends gave. If you remember, I like dancing and enjoyed it very much while I was at college. And so one day when I went to a dance and the men began asking for dances, out of recklessness, I danced and later I went home and told Mother about it. Well, I wish you had been here at the after math. You would think that I was the most disgraceful creature on the face of the earth because I had danced, and that the only thing that I could do to show my repentance and to wipe out this stain of disgrace from the Soong name would be to sit in sack cloth and ashes the rest of natural life and to turn my eyes away in pious disgust at all others who asks me to dance with them. Mercy, it was some scene, old dear. At the next dance to which I was invited, Mother tried to make me promise not to dance. I had decided not to dance anyway, but when she tried to make me promise, I became very much provoked and told her that I certainly intended to dance and to dance a lot too. She was so upset though about it that finally I weakened and promised her that as long as I bear the name of Soong I shall not dance in CHINA.

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Please notice the last word, for if I ever get back to America, I am going to kick my heels off. But I will.

This week I have been kept home by necessity, as I went to a Bridge party last Saturday and came home at the wee hours of the morning, two o'clock to be exact. As a result; I have been in bed ever since with tonsillitis and an enraged wisdom tooth which has showed its symptoms of appearance by the swelling, and making me look fat and redly puffy on one side. Mother has been pointing out to me that such late hours prevent my acquiring any wisdom worth mentioning and for that reason I am having such a hard time cutting the wisdom tooth. Let me say right now, that I never thought that the acquisition of knowledge could be so painful and lasting. The only compensation which I seem to be getting out of this is plenty of leisure to myself by myself, as altho I find speech a painful operation, whoever enters my room finds the lashings of my unswollen tongue still more painful.

As I wrote you, a friend of mine, Percy Kwok is coming to America and I asked him to take some things over for you. I have for you a little jade locket, a bit of Chinese trimming, and an embroidered crepe de Chine corset cover. I think the other packages for the other people are all marked. By the way, the pair of bedroom slippers is for Melly Baldwin, and the pair of baby shoes for her baby. Besides all the things there is a rather longish package look-[page break] ing like a parasol. This package has some other packages packed inside it. Please address it to Miss Margie Burks, Wesleyan College Macon, Georgia. and register it after packing it in a thick paste board box so that the parasol will not break. I had all the packages packed in one box, but Percy said that he would have to undo the box to get the things in there. I think I shall give you a list of the things he is supposed to deliver to you so that in case he forgets you can remind him.

For you, one corset cover, one pendant, one piece of trimming.  
For Melly, one pair bedroom slippers, one pair of baby shoes.  
For Betty, one small package, consisting of a crepe de Chine Teddy Bear,  
For Reno, one small package and a package for her Mother  
For Teddy, one small package.  
For Grandada, Mrs. Mills and Mrs DeLong, each a small package  
For Miss Burks, a longish package.

It seems to me that I sent you only twenty dollars for the Magazines, and so I am enclosing a check for another ten as there will be postage for the packages too. Thank you ever so much for getting the Mags for me. The English Nation was what I wanted, really. In comparison to it, The American Nation is colorless and inane.

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By the way, Percy Kwok's sister is one of my very good friends here in Shanghai and we have quite a bit of fun together as I am only a few months older than she. She is to be married this spring and I am to be the maid of honor. If it were not for the fact that divorces here are harder to get than in America, I think I might take a shot at it myself, as there are plenty of agreeable but somewhat colorless youths around our crowd. The worst is that it is easier to get into matrimony than to get out of it, and what amuses me one day disgusts me the next. But I am not being cynical, for I am getting a lot of fun and humor out of life altho I do wish you were to play with me.

I want to tell you how I am impressed with the two books you sent me but as this letter is already long and I am feeling puffier still I shall write next time.

With love,

Daughter



30 Seymour Road,  
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II February, 1920

Dear Ada,

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